Appl. No: 10/670,545
Amdt. Dated August 17, 2005
Reply to Office action of June 17, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1(Currently Amended).   A, system for managing a product distribution channel having a plurality of channel participants, the method comprising:

one or more reference record databases;

5   one or more reference records within the reference record databases, each reference record providing an association between business information and spatial data for a specific channel participant;

transaction data related to at least one channel participant;

a candidate identification mechanism for accessing one-or more than

10   one candidate reference record[[s]] from one of the reference record databases using spatial and business data derived from the transaction data; and

a spatial matching mechanism for matching a subset of the candidate reference records to the transaction data.

2(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a consumer of the product who receives the product from the distribution channel.

3(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a producer of the product who places the product in the distribution channel.

4(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a distributor of the product who receives the product from a producer and distributes the product to a consumer.

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5(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein at least one channel participant comprises a reseller such as a dealer, agent, branch, and the like.

6(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein the candidate identification mechanism further comprises a geo-coding mechanism operable to determine street-level spatial data from the transaction data.

7(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein the candidate identification mechanism determines postal code information from the transaction data.

8(Original).   The system of claim 1 wherein the candidate identification mechanism determines location information from the transaction data.

9(Original).   The system of claim 6 wherein the candidate identification mechanism further comprises a selection mechanism for retrieving records that have spatial data substantially matching the spatial data obtained from the transaction record.

10(Original).   The system of claim 9 wherein the reference record comprises:

a reference identifier identifying the channel participant;

a business name; and

spatial information with predetermined accuracy.

11(Original).   The system of claim 10 wherein the predetermined accuracy is street-level accuracy.

12(Original).   The system of claim 10 wherein the predetermined accuracy is postal accuracy.

13(Original).   The system of claim 9 wherein the matching mechanism further comprises:

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a lexical matching process operable to correlate non-spatial data in the transaction record with non-spatial data in the candidate reference records.

14(Original). The system of claim 9 wherein the matching mechanism further comprises:

a lexical matching process operable to correlate spatial data in the transaction record with spatial data in the candidate reference records.

15(Original). The system of claim 13 wherein the lexical matching process generates a score for each candidate reference record.

16(Original). The system of claim 15 further comprising:

a selection process operable to select a candidate reference record based on the generated score exceeding a pre-selected threshold value, wherein the selected candidate reference record provides a precise
5   identification of the at least one channel participant related to the transaction data.

17(Original). The system of claim 16 wherein the selection process makes automated assignments to select candidates when the scores exceed a predetermined high threshold.

Claims 18-32(Cancelled).

33(Currently Amended).   A method for identifying distribution channel participants comprising:

generating a transaction record comprising data that imprecisely identifies at least one channel participant;
5   geo-coding location data within the transaction record to determine a spatial identifier for the transaction record;

providing a reference record database comprising a plurality of reference records where each reference record comprises business

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information having greater precision than the transaction record and each
10   record is associated with a spatial identifier; and

identifying one-or more than one reference record[[s]] in the reference record database by matching the spatial identifier of the transaction record with spatial identifiers associated with reference records.

34(Original). The method of claim 33 wherein the at least one channel participant is an end customer.

35(Currently Amended).   The method of claim 33 further comprising:

applying non-spatial matching processes to select one of the one-or more reference records and using the selected reference record to precisely identify the at least one channel participant.

36(Original). The method of claim 33 further comprising:

using the one or more identified referenced records to attribute transactions to another channel participant, wherein the transaction record itself is has insufficient precision to accurately attribute the transactions.

Claims 37-39 (Cancelled).

40(Original). The system of claim 1 further comprising a learning database mechanism operable to hold records that create associations between information within transaction records that could not be automatically matched with reference records and the desired reference record so that subsequent transaction records can be matched with the desired reference records using the association provided by the learning database.

41(Original). The system of claim 40 wherein the learning database is populated based on analysis of transaction records that require manual intervention to be associated with the desired reference record.

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